



**Alaska Department of Health and Social Services
Legislative Intent Language for Grant Program \$50,000 and below**

In fiscal year 2008, the Legislature approved intent language to reduce the administrative burden for grantees who receive a grant award from DHSS for \$50,000 or less. The intent language encouraged DHSS to make a single “up-front” payment for any grant award that is \$50,000 or less and to reduce the quarterly reporting requirements to a single year-end final report.

DHSS strives to ensure success among all programs funded by DHSS, and, despite initial concerns, moved forward by identifying all the programs that met the intent language. As of July 1, 2009, DHSS has begun its first round of streamlining efforts regarding the limited reporting and payment structure for grants under \$50,000.

As of July 31, 2009, DHSS issued 124 grant awards under \$50,000. Of those:

- 17 will require year-end reports only (July 30)
- 25 require semiannual reporting (Jan 30 and July 30)
- 47 will receive a single payment (upon 15 days of the executed grant award)

Although 47 out of 124 grants may seem like a low number to be receiving a single payment, the following statistics may offer more perspective.

Of the 124 grants awarded at \$50,000 or less:

- 17 will be paid at 85 percent up-front with final 15 percent upon receipt of annual report (Alaska Children’s Trust).
- 12 will be paid at 90 percent up-front with final 10 percent upon receipt of final reports (two Developmental Disabilities and 10 Community Initiatives grants).
- 22 will be paid at 80 percent up-front with an additional 15 percent upon receipt of semiannual reports, and final 5 percent upon receipt of final report, or 20 percent upon receipt of final report. (Juvenile Justice).
- Five others are on varying alternate payment and reporting schedules.
- The Division of Behavioral Health grants that are over \$50,000 will be paid 60 percent up-front, an additional 35 percent upon receipt of second-quarter reports, and the final 5 percent upon receipt of final reports.

There are approximately 19 other grants for more than \$50,000 that have been, or will be, put on alternate payment/reporting schedules.

Of the 124 grants of less than \$50,000, 56 will now be under an alternate payment/reporting schedule and 47 will receive single up-front payment grants. The 20 remaining grants will have standard quarterly payment and reporting for various reasons (prior non-compliance, program is a reimbursement, prior history of not spending, etc.).

Through the Grantee Partnership Project, DHSS is currently evaluating more than 100 fiscal year 2010 grant program quarterly/statistical reporting requirements. The goal of this evaluation is to streamline quarterly reporting requirements by identifying redundant information, information collected but not analyzed/utilized, or those programs that could be managed appropriately using a semiannual or year-end reporting time line. Thus far, DHSS has evaluated approximately seventeen programs and have identified seven programs that will either see their reporting requirement reduced to semiannual reports or will see a reduction in information currently collected by DHSS.

DHSS is making progress on meeting legislative intent despite initial concerns surrounding DHSS' responsibility for providing oversight and technical support to grantees who receive public funds. Without quarterly reporting, DHSS staff felt they would have little opportunity to provide technical assistance to those programs struggling with program requirements and not communicating this to DHSS. Staff members were also concerned about the need to procure or issue grant awards to grantees for the upcoming fiscal year without having current information to evaluate whether the grantee's current program was successful. DHSS grant awards are issued to grantees in June of one fiscal year, while grant reports are not due to DHSS until July 30 of the next fiscal year. The decision to execute a new grant award to those grantees without receipt of a single report would diminish DHSS' ability to ensure that only those programs which succeed in providing appropriate service delivery are eligible for a new or continued grant award for the next fiscal year.

For fiscal year 2010, DHSS streamlined many of the 124 grants that met the intent language. Because this is a new mechanism for managing grant programs, DHSS will implement the intent language over a period of two to four years depending on the current grant cycle, federal requirements, and funding authority.

Streamlining Grant Solicitations:

DHSS continues to make progress in other areas. We have implemented two new solicitation processes for fiscal year 2010; this includes the newly developed Request for Informal Grant Proposal (RFIGP) and the eGrants on-line continuation process. For fiscal year 2010, DHSS streamlined four (4) of its grant programs utilizing the RFIGP. DHSS also issued 56 fiscal year 2010 grant awards through the eGrants new online continuation process.

The department believes the seed of this intent language and other streamlining efforts has been planted and DHSS will continue to consider alternative schedules and methods for reporting requirements, paying grantees, and issuing grant solicitations.

Through the Grantee Partnership Project, DHSS will provide examples to help DHSS managers communicate with grantees throughout the year to ensure programs are on track without having to rely completely on narrative reports.

Because maintaining good communication with grantees is a focus for DHSS, we developed Grantee Relations Policy and Procedures, which require DHSS program staff to communicate with grantees at least once a quarter. The policy and procedures can be found on our Web site at the following link <http://www.hss.state.ak.us/grantees/assets/259.pdf> .